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ABSTRACT

Following a review of programs conducted under the Job Training Partnership Act in Florida, the following recommendations were implemented: long-term performance was evaluated; local training efforts were examined; and employment training program oversight responsibility was assigned to Enterprise Florida Jobs and Education Partnership. Further activities will be needed, however, to implement the following recommendations: (1) prevent duplication of funding; (2) expand one-stop career centers to make it easier and more efficient for individuals to obtain state workforce development services; (3) monitor performance-based incentive funding to prevent loss of federal funds; and (4) consolidate duplicative state employment training programs. (KC)

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THE FLORIDA LEGISLATURE

Report No. 96-54

Office of
Program Policy Analysis
And Government Accountability

John W. Turcotte, Director

February 17, 1997

Follow-Up Report on the Review of the Job Training Partnership Act

Report Abstract

Although some of our recommendations have been implemented, additional action will be needed by the Department of Labor and Employment Security, Department of Education, and Enterprise Florida Jobs and Education Partnership to fully implement our recommendations for:

- **Preventing duplication of funding;**
- **Expanding one stop career centers to make it easier and more efficient for individuals to obtain state workforce development services;**
- **Monitoring performance-based incentive funding to prevent loss of federal funds; and**
- **Consolidating duplicative state employment training programs.**

Purpose of Review

In accordance with s. 11.45(7)(f), F.S., this follow-up report informs the Legislature of actions taken by the Department of Labor and Employment Security in response to our Report No. 94-41, which we issued on March 8, 1995. This report presents our assessment of the extent to which the Department has addressed the findings and recommendations included in Report No. 94-41.

Background

The Job Training Partnership Act Program is intended to increase employment and earnings, to increase educational and occupational skills, and to reduce welfare dependency. Title II of the Act serves the economically disadvantaged and Title III serves dislocated workers. The Department of Labor and Employment Security issues all rules and instructions for Job Training Partnership Act programs, conducts programmatic and fiscal monitoring reviews of administrative entities (e.g., service delivery areas), and provides technical assistance to ensure compliance with the Act. Title I, Section 123 of the Act allocates monies to the state education agency for state education coordination and other services. The Department of Education administers Section 123 funds. Program funds are used to acquire services needed by participants, such as vocational training, remedial education, on-the-job training, employment counseling, and other support services such as transportation and child care.

The Legislature established the Enterprise Florida Jobs and Education Partnership in 1994. [1] The purpose of the Partnership is to create and maintain a highly-skilled workforce able to respond to rapidly changing technology and market opportunities essential to a competitive Florida economy. The Partnership was also given responsibility for developing and overseeing the implementation of a program to provide financial incentives to local educational agencies that are successful in improving student outcomes. In 1996, the Legislature designated the Enterprise Florida Jobs and Education Partnership as the state's Human Resource Investment Council, giving it monitoring and oversight responsibilities for the state's workforce education and training system.

Through the designation of Human Resource Investment Council, the Enterprise Florida Jobs and Education Partnership assumed the authority and responsibilities of the State Job Training Coordinating Council, which advises the Governor on employment training issues, develops the required Governor's coordination and special services plan, recommends the use of funds, reviews and certifies local plans, and coordinates and monitors programs and services. Program services are provided through 25 local service delivery areas designated by the Governor. [2] Local governments in each service delivery area select an administrative entity that is responsible for receiving Program funds and implementing the programs (e.g., contracting with entities to provide program services).

[1] Pursuant to s. 288.0475, F.S., the Enterprise Florida Jobs and Education Partnership is a not-for-profit corporation with a Board of Directors whose membership includes leaders from the Executive and Legislative branches as well as high ranking officials in the private sector.

[2] The 25 service delivery areas have been reconfigured and redesignated as 25 regional workforce development boards.

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Prior Findings

(1) Evaluate long-term performance. Outcome measures have been established to evaluate the performance of the Program. These outcome measures assess the short-term and intermediate outcomes of individuals participating in the Program. However, the measures do not assess the long-term effectiveness of the Program, such as whether Program participants are more likely to obtain jobs and remain employed than similar persons who have not completed the Program.

(2) Examine local training efforts. The Department has developed procedures to ensure that the service delivery areas assess and meet the training needs of the local population. In addition, the service delivery areas must provide training for occupations for which there is a demand in the area where participants will be seeking employment. However, in monitoring service delivery areas for compliance with these procedures the Department's efforts have focused on ensuring compliance with federal requirements as opposed to assessing the effectiveness of service delivery areas training strategies.

(3) Assign employment training program oversight responsibility to Enterprise Florida Jobs and Education Partnership. The 1992 Job Training Partnership Act Reform Amendments authorized states to establish Human Resource Investment Councils to provide oversight of state employment training programs established by federal law. A Human Resource Investment Council would be responsible for advising a state's Governor on coordinating federal human resource programs, ways to meet the human investment needs in the state while maximizing the use of federal funds and avoiding duplication of services, and developing and implementing state and local standards and performance measures. States may establish a Human Resource Investment Council to carry out the duties and functions of and replace the existing state councils established under applicable federal law, such as the State Job Training Coordinating Council and the Council on Vocational Education. There are 17 advisory councils established in Florida with oversight responsibility for education and training programs that could be included in a Human Resource Investment Council.

(4) Prevent duplication of funding. There are two areas for which there is a risk of duplication of funding by the service delivery areas and the Department of Education:

- **Payments for services.** There are internal control weaknesses that may allow local education agencies to receive duplicate payments from the service delivery area and the Department of Education for services rendered to Program participants. The Department of Labor and Employment Security has not issued guidance to the service delivery areas on how to minimize the risk of this type of duplicate funding and does not monitor whether service delivery areas prevent duplication in this area.

- **Contracting for customized training.** Proviso language from annual General Appropriations Acts prohibits local education agencies from reporting full time equivalent students for state funding when the local education agencies have been fully funded by an external agency for the direct instructional costs of any course or program. However, Department of Labor and Employment Security and Department of Education staff stated they do not monitor service delivery area and local education agency practices to prevent this type of duplicate funding as they were unaware of this proviso language. The Office of the Auditor General determined that two community colleges had reported Program clients enrolled in customized courses as full-time equivalent students during fiscal year ending June 30, 1993.

(5) Expand one stop career centers. The current patchwork of employment training programs confuses individuals seeking assistance because it has no clear entry point, no clear path for trainees to move from one program to another, and programs have varying eligibility requirements. Of major interest at the federal and state levels is establishing one stop career centers to consolidate workforce development service delivery. The Department of Labor and Employment Security has completed the initial phase of implementing one stop career centers by merging the Job Service and Unemployment Compensation offices into a single intake and eligibility determination system.

(6) Monitor performance-based incentive funding to prevent loss of federal funds. Performance-based incentive funding is a state initiative for improving Florida's workforce development through funding of employment training classes based on outcomes. In 1994, the Florida Legislature authorized performance-based incentive funding for local education agencies using several sources of federal funding, which requires federal regulations governing the use of the funds be met. Federal policy limits the annual carry forward of Title III dollars (the primary source of funds allocated for performance-based incentive funding) to 20% each program year. As incentives are only awarded to local education agencies after students have completed occupational training and been placed in targeted occupations, it is possible that earning of incentive dollars may take up to two or three years. This could place Title III funds that have been allocated by the state for performance-based incentive funding, but not yet earned by the local education agencies at risk of reverting back to the federal government at the end of the program year.

(7) Consolidate duplicative state employment training programs. There are 48 workforce development programs authorized to provide employment training services to adults and youth in Florida many of which share common goals, serve the same categories of participants, and offer similar services through fragmented administrative structures. Although Congressional reform is required before changes to federal employment training programs

can be made, programs established at the state level could be reviewed for consolidation or elimination.

(8) Evaluate use of opportunity cards. Opportunity cards serve as a voucher system or means of allowing a participant to obtain employment training services from any eligible vendor in the state. The issuance of opportunity cards by the Department would allow participants more flexibility in choosing the source and type of training, would make it more convenient for intake counselors as the card readily identifies client eligibility for services, and would reduce the paperwork associated with manual voucher systems.

Actions Taken

The following recommendations have been implemented.

(1) Evaluate long-term performance. To evaluate the long-term performance of the Program, we recommended that the Department determine the employment rate and weekly earnings of Program participants at longer intervals after Program completion (e.g., two years). The Department has entered into a contract with the Florida Educational Training Placement Information Program to track job retention of former participants one year after completing the program.[3]

(2) Examine local training efforts. We recommended that the Department examine how well each service delivery area's training efforts and plans meet local employment needs. Recent state legislation requires that job training meet the needs and demands of local business.[4] Consequently, Department planning and training efforts, which are driven by this legislation, base the granting of charters, award of incentive payments, and subsequent performance evaluations on whether local efforts and plans meet local needs.

(3) Assign employment training program oversight responsibility to Enterprise Florida Jobs and Education Partnership. To improve coordination and cooperation among employment training programs, we recommended the state assign the Enterprise Florida Jobs and Education Partnership with oversight responsibility for employment training programs in Florida. The Legislature and the Governor designated the Enterprise Florida Jobs and Education Partnership as the state's Human Resource Investment Council.[5] However, the Commissioner of Education has not agreed to include the Council on Vocational Education in the Human Resource Investment Council. Although the Job Training Partnership Act provides the Council on Vocational Education must agree to be included in a Human Resource Investment Council, the continued existence of both councils will lead to a duplication of duties and functions.

Actions Partially Taken

Although some of our recommendations have been implemented, additional steps will be needed by the Department of Labor and Employment Security, Department of Education, and Enterprise Florida Jobs and Education Partnership to fully implement our recommendations to prevent duplication of funding, expand one stop career centers, and monitor performance-based incentive funding.

(4) Prevent duplication of funding. We recommended that the Department of Labor and Employment Security in conjunction with the Department of Education develop procedures and provide training to the service delivery areas and local education agencies to prevent duplication of funding for **payments for services** and **contracting for customized training.** Department of Labor and Employment Security and Department of Education staff indicate they have discussed these issues during contract negotiations with and training of service delivery area and local education agency staff. However, written procedures have not been issued to ensure this type of duplication does not occur.

We also recommended that the Department of Labor and Employment Security include in its monitoring of service delivery areas steps to review and test these controls. The Department's Bureau of Compliance has developed procedures for monitoring service delivery areas to ensure there is a mechanism in place to ensure this sort of duplication does not occur and for notifying the Department of Education problems are identified with the use of Section 123 funds.

(5) Expand one stop career centers. We recommended the Department continue with its plans to expand the recently established one stop career centers to include eligibility determination for other programs such as the Job Training Partnership Act. The Department established 90 Jobs and Benefits Centers by merging the Job Service and Unemployment Compensation offices and has begun its efforts to integrate the delivery of other program services through one stop career centers.

However, efforts to coordinate with the Job Training Partnership Act Program have been limited. As indicated in Exhibit 1, as of August 1996, the Program has co-located staff and integrated the delivery of services in only 16% of the Centers. Twenty-seven percent of the offices have achieved no level of coordination (e.g., have not established cooperative agreements, co-located staff, or

[3] The Florida Educational Training Placement Information Program is an interagency data collection system that uses Unemployment Compensation Quarterly Wage System records and other information to provide follow up data on participants of several state programs.

[4] In 1996 the Legislature passed the Workforce Florida Act of 1996, economic development legislation, and the Work and Gain Economic Self-sufficiency Act, Chs. 96-404, 96-320, and 96-175, Laws of Florida, respectively, which focus on state initiatives established by the Governor to improve and promote state workforce development, economic development, and welfare reform.

[5] With the designation of Human Resource Investment Council, the Partnership assumed the authority and responsibilities of the State Job Training Coordinating Council and was given oversight responsibility for vocational education.

Exhibit 1
Department Efforts to Expand One Stop Career Centers to Include the Job Training Partnership Act Program Have Been Limited

Region:	I	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	All
Number of Offices[1]:	20	14	9	13	14	8	12	90
Level of Coordination With Program as of August 1996								
No Coordination	5%	7%	33%	54%			100%	27%
Cooperative Agreements for Making Referrals for Services (Not Co-located)	15%	7%	11%	8%	14%	25%		11%
Co-located Staff	45%	71%	44%	23%	36%	50%		39%
Co-located Staff and Providing Integrated Services	35%	7%	11%	15%	21%			16%
Co-located Through Electronic Connection					29%	25%		7%
Fully Automated System Electronically Connecting all Partners and Service Points, Providing Integrated Services, Case Management, and Administrative Support		7%						1%

[1]Percentages do not total 100% due to rounding.

Source: Division of Jobs and Benefits, Department of Labor and Employment Security

integrated the delivery of services). The Department has been awarded a grant for expanding one stop career centers, which may allow the Department to increase coordination between the Centers and the Program. The grant, the amount of which is still being negotiated, will be received in July 1997.

(6) Monitor performance-based incentive funding to prevent loss of federal funds. To ensure that the performance-based incentive funding initiative does not endanger the receipt of federal funds, we recommended the Department continue to work with the Department of Commerce, the Enterprise Florida Jobs and Education Partnership, and other state officials to monitor the implementation of this initiative.[6] In program year 1994-95, unexpended Title III funds exceeded the federal limit that the state can carry forward to the next fiscal year.[7] Consequently, the next year's allocations were reduced by $3.8 million.

The Department obtained a waiver that allows the state to keep all carry forwards in prior years as long as 80% of the current year's funding is spent. Alternate Use Plans have been developed for use at the local level when it is determined that Title III funds allocated for performance-based incentive funding will not be earned in incentives during the course of the fiscal year. Participating school districts and community colleges can submit Alternate Use Plans to fund special activities and initiatives which would enhance the performance-based incentive funding program with up to 25% of their Title III allocation for performance-based incentive funding. However, no entity has been formally charged with monitoring the expenditure of funds at the state level to ensure Florida does not exceed its carry forward of 20%.

[6] With the abolishment of the Department of Commerce in 1996, the Office of Tourism, Trade, and Economic Development took over the Department of Commerce's responsibility for the allocation of funds for performance-based incentive funding.

[7] The performance-based incentive funding program expended $1 million of the $17 million allocated to the Program from the Title III funds that year.

Actions Not Taken

Our recommendation to consolidate duplicative state employment training programs has not been implemented by the Enterprise Florida Jobs and Education Partnership and our recommendation to the Department of Labor and Employment Security to evaluate the use of opportunity cards is pending.

(7) Consolidate duplicative state employment training programs. We recommended the Enterprise Florida Jobs and Education Partnership review the 22 state employment training programs and make recommendations for consolidation to the Legislature. As directed by the Governor, the Enterprise Florida Jobs and Education Partnership has taken a leadership role in redesigning the state's workforce development system. The Partnership has reviewed the administration of the various workforce development programs at the local level and developed proposals for improving customer flow and reducing duplication and administrative costs. The Governor, in response, reconfigured and redesigned the service delivery areas as regional workforce development boards that meet federal requirements as well as state expectations. However, the Partnership has not reviewed the 22 state employment training programs and made recommendations for consolidation to the Legislature.

(8) Evaluate use of opportunity cards. Establishing one stop career centers that have a single intake and eligibility determination system has been cited as a prerequisite to implementing the use of opportunity cards. We recommended the Department evaluate how opportunity cards can be used in conjunction with the delivery of employment training program services, once the one stop career centers are expanded. The Department has not yet evaluated the use of opportunity cards, but has indicated that it will do so once one stop career centers have been fully implemented.

This project was conducted in accordance with applicable evaluation standards. Copies of this report may be obtained by telephone (904/488-1023 or 800/531-2477), by FAX (904/487-3804), in person (Claude Pepper Building, Room 312, 111 W. Madison St.), or by mail (OPPAGA Report Production, P.O. Box 1735, Tallahassee, FL 32302). Web site: http://www.state.fl.us/oppaga/

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